

---

Citation:

Williams, TL and Smith, B and Papathomas, A (2015) From research to practice: Enabling healthcare professionals to promote a physically activity lifestyle to people with spinal cord injury. In: British Psychological Society, Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 14 Dec 2015, Leeds, UK.

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/3097/>

Document Version:

Conference or Workshop Item (Presentation)

---

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on [openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

# From research to practice: Enabling healthcare professionals to promote a physically active lifestyle to people with spinal cord injury

Dr Toni Williams, Leeds Beckett University  
Prof. Brett Smith, University of Birmingham  
Dr Anthony Papathomas, Loughborough University

# Introduction

- People with spinal cord injury (SCI) are largely inactive
- Physiotherapists key messengers for physical activity (PA) & health promotion
- Valued and trusted by people with SCI





## Physio 14: Physios are the exercise specialists of choice, delegates say

NEWS AND EVENTS



### News

Frontline magazine

Blogs and columns

Physiotherapy News email

Events

CSP on Twitter

### CONNECT WITH US

Follow us on Twitter

Find us on Facebook

Find us on Vimeo

### BASKET

View your shopping cart.

11 October 2014 - 2:52pm

Some universities in England are increasing the amount of time students spend learning about helping patients to exercise, several hundred delegates attending a debate on the second day of the conference heard.

Tweet 43

Like 134

2

Comment 1



The great debate: Are physiotherapists the exercise specialists of choice for people with long-term conditions? Photo: Simon Hadley

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

ADDED BY:  
Ian A McMillan



### TAGGED AS

Exercise, Physiotherapy  
profession

### MORE FROM THE CSP

#physioworks

# Spinal cord injury & physical activity

- Purpose
  - Explore what physiotherapists in SCI rehabilitation **think** about PA for people with SCI and what they **do** in relation to promoting PA
- Method
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - 18 neurological physiotherapists (2-22 years' experience)
  - Inductive thematic analysis



# Theme 1

## 1) Perceived importance of physical activity

- Well-being, physical health, preventative medicine, quality of life
- Tacit knowledge practical experience



# Theme 1

The problem is physios are **not trained** to properly fitness train a patient. A sports therapist may have learnt to get someone fit, but I believe in spinal cord injury there are not many physios who can just take a patient to the gym and give them fitness training that would work for them. It is not part of their obvious route. It is **not yet in the culture** that physical activity is something the physios should be doing.

# Theme 2



## 2) Hit and miss physical activity promotion

- Active PA promotion largely absent
- Barriers in rehabilitation and community



# Theme 2

And then there are other patients that you just never see other than occasionally in their one-to-one session. And then it's like **how do you get to those patients that aren't really doing anything?** And then it's hard because there is part of me that thinks well they might never have been to a gym before... I think there's a limit on what you can do, if they're not bothered **what are you going to do to make them do that (physical activity)?**

# Theme 3

## 3) Unease with activity-based rehabilitation

- Good idea in theory
- Conflict with rehab and concern with messages promoted



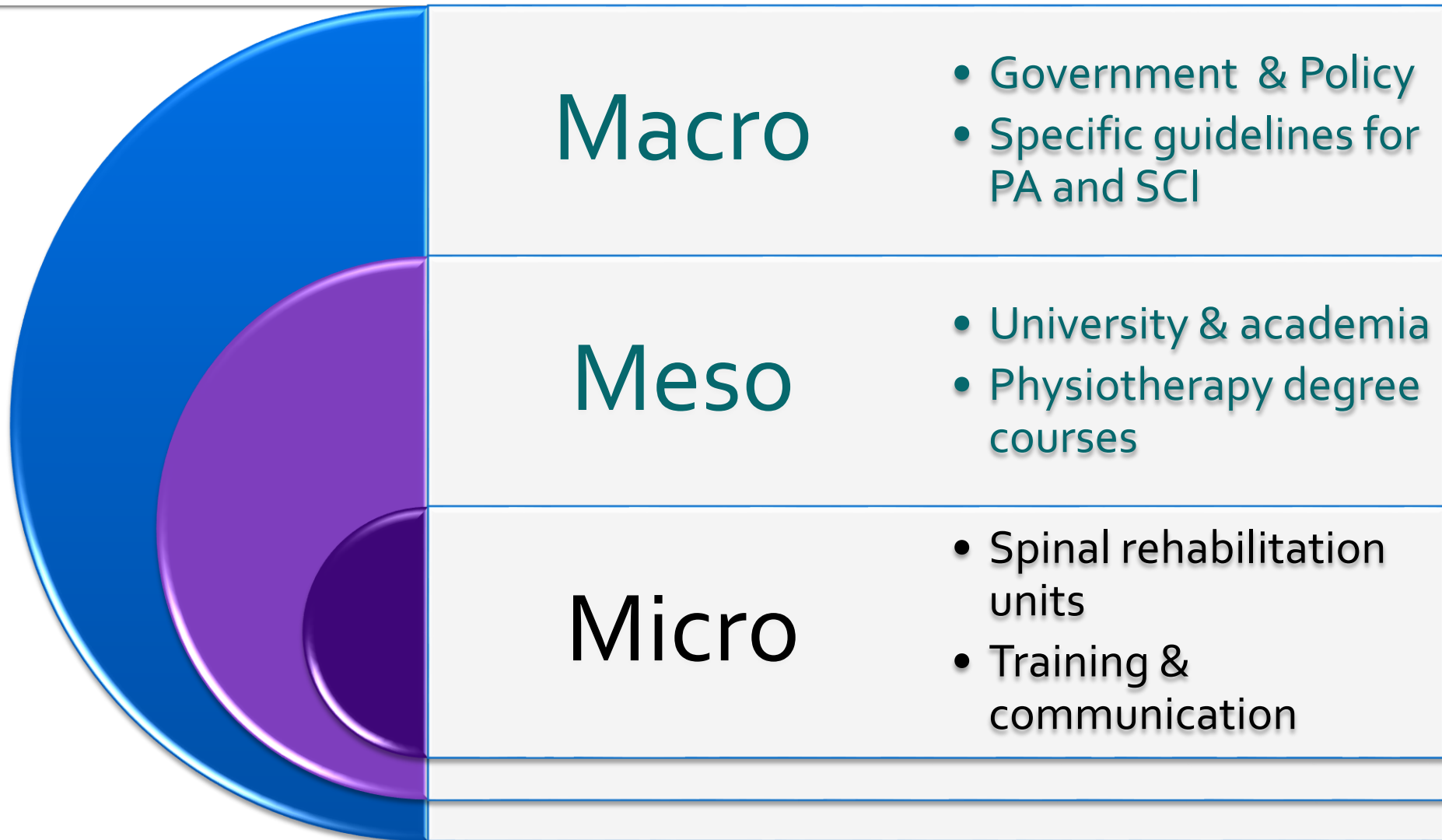
# Theme 3

You have to be careful because you don't know where down that scale of adjustment and coping they are at and it can be **dangerous**.

Interviewer: What do you see as those dangers?

I guess the dangers to me are that you are misinforming patients of **unrealistic expectations** and you could be setting them up for a crash. You know they've already had a life changing traumatic event, you don't want them to build all their hopes, all their **expectations... on a potential false hope**.

# Knowledge translation



# References

- Letts, L., Martin Ginis, K. A., Faulkner, G., Colquhoun, H., Levac, D., & Gorczynski, P. (2011). Preferred methods and messengers for delivering physical activity information to people with spinal cord injury: A focus group study. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 56*, 128-137.
- Morris, J. H., & Williams, B. (2009). Optimising long-term participation in physical activities after stroke: Exploring new ways of working for physiotherapists. *Physiotherapy, 95*, 227-233.
- Mulligan, H., Fjellman-Wiklund, A., Hale, L., Thomas, D., & Hager-Ross, C. (2011). Promoting physical activity for people with neurological disability: perspectives and experiences of physiotherapists. *Physiotherapy . Theory and Practice, 27*, 399-401.
- Smith, B., Tomasone, J. R., Latimer-Cheung, A. E., & Martin Ginis, K. A. (2015). Narrative as a knowledge translation tool for facilitating impact: Translating physical activity knowledge to disabled people and health professionals. *Health Psychology, 34*, 303-313.
- Williams, T. L., Smith, B., & Papathomas, A. (2014). The barriers, benefits and facilitators of leisure time physical activity among people with spinal cord injury: A meta-synthesis of qualitative findings. *Health Psychology Review, 8*, 404-425.



# Thank you

- T.L.Williams@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
- @T\_L\_WilliamsPhD



Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY